

Abstract No 53

A Structural Linguistic Study of Cumaratunga Munidasa's Neologisms of Sanskrit Origin

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Cumaratunga Munidasa (25th July 1887 - 02nd March 1944) is admired as the first scholar to recognise the need of Sinhalese neologisms capable of imparting modern scientific and technical knowledge in the twentieth century. Being the pioneer ideologist of the Sinhalese purist school, he is popularly known for his strong resistance to Sanskrit borrowings. Still, among the neologisms he coined before his ideological shift to extreme purism, a considerable number of neologisms of Sanskrit origin are found. This study attempts to examine the structural linguistic features of these neologisms formed by Cumaratunga employing Sanskrit roots. Accordingly, an adequate corpus of data was collected by referring to a number of books and articles written by Cumaratunga. Theories in structural linguistics were utilised for the data analysis. All the Sanskrit borrowings among Cumaratunga's neologisms can be broadly categorised into two typological classes as adopted borrowings and adapted borrowings. Adopted borrowings are foreign words introduced into a language without any phonemic alteration in their forms. Among these both complex words and compound words are found. Complex words are the morphological constructions formed by attaching affixes to root forms. These constructions contain both prefixed forms and suffixed forms. Compound words are the morphological constructions that contain more than one root form. Among these both two-root compounds and poly-root compounds are found. Adapted borrowings are foreign words induced into a target language with various formal alterations to assure compliance with its phonology. Vowel shortening, aspiration loss and dentalisation are the three main processes of phonological simplification operated in adapting Sanskrit borrowings. It has been observed that most of the neologisms coined by Cumaratunga employing Sanskrit roots are not original coinages, but loan translations which render meanings borrowed from English with forms borrowed from Sanskrit. Therefore in conclusion it can be stated that such neologisms are of bifurcated origin.

Keywords: *borrowing, coining, morphology, neologism, phonology*